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T H E
EXTRAORDINARY CLAIMS
OF THE
CLERGY
REPUGNANT TO

Reason and Christianity;

AND THE
ARGUMENTS advanced in their Defence,
in a late APOLOGY *for the Clergy of the*
Church of England, Examined.

In a LETTER from a LAYMAN to the
Reverend Dr. STEBBING.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for T. COOPER, at the *Globe*, in *Pater-*
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THE
EXTRAORDINARY CLAIMS
OF THE
CLERGY
RESPONDANT TO

Reason and Christianity.



ARGUMENTS in their Defence,
in a late ADDRESS for the Clergy of the
Church of England, Examined.

IN A LETTER from a LAYMAN to the
Reverend Dr. STEPHENS.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. Cooper, at the Globe, in Pall-mall.
J. K. M. D. C. C. X. V.



Reverend S I R,



Some time ago read a small Tract, entitled, *An Apology for the CLERGY of the Church of England, touching their Claims of spiritual Powers, as derived from Christ, addressed to the LAITY of Great Britain*; without thinking it worth any farther Notice: Supposing it the Production of some dissatisfied Curate, wrote either to please his Patron, or to revenge some trifling Affront supposed to be given his GOWN. But, on my being lately assured it came from a no less masterly Hand than your own, I prevailed with myself to make a few cursory Remarks on it; in order to convince you how far beneath yourself the near Relation of the Subject has unwarily carried you; and, to prevent your thinking it beyond

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The CLAIMS of the CLERGY

Answer because no better Pen has thought it deserved one. And I judge it proper here to declare, that no base or personal View whatever was the Occasion of this Address; but a disinterested Zeal for Truth, to which, you will certainly agree with me, all Considerations ought to give place.

THE Title you have chose is grand and pompous, *An Apology for the CLERGY, addressed to the LAITY*. On reading this, one would imagine the Clergy, at least in your Opinion, willing to submit *their CLAIMS* to *our Decision*: But, at your Beginning, you tell us the Causes of your writing:

- P. 3. “THE *English* Clergy have of late
 “ been treated in so extraordinary a
 “ manner, that it is high time the
 “ Publick should be made sensible what
 “ *Rights* they have to the many *Civili-*
 “ ties that are daily bestowed upon
 “ them.”

IF, Sir, the PUBLICK are, till this time o’day, ignorant of the Rights of the Clergy; they have hitherto paid them extraordinary Reverence and MONEY to a fine Purpose: For the *Publick* here, I apprehend, means the whole
 Na-

Nation, except the Clergy; and whence we poor Laymen of ALL Conditions may judge your Opinion of our Favours. — However, our knowing so little before will render us the more obliged for your useful Discoveries.

“ As the Title of my Book speaks P. 4.
 “ Good-will to that Order of Men”,
 [Priests] “ I foresee that many Prejudices will lie against it; yet I will not
 “ so far despair of the Justice of Mankind, as not to believe, that Truth (by
 “ whomsoever offered) will *somewhere*
 “ meet with Friends; especially when
 “ it shall appear, that *the Dispute is not*
 “ *about the temporal Rights of Clergymen, but about Rights of another kind,*
 “ *in which the Interest of our common*
 “ *Christianity is more directly and immediately concerned.*”

Now, Doctor, we shall understand one another presently: You have here unluckily fallen into the so often exploded Rant of the Gown. — If we offer to diminish the POWER, or even tear off the Hem of a CLERGYMAN'S Garment, it is roundly asserted, that the CHURCH has received a grievous Rent; and, perhaps, the secular Arm shall be ap-

plied to for Redress of the Grievance. — This Artifice has been already so frequently decry'd, that I wonder to find it dish'd out again, even without the least Garnish to whet our Appetites: Could the Clergy once bring us seriously to believe, that by opposing THEM we oppose CHRIST, their Work were done, and they then may lead or drive us at their Pleasure, according to the pious Endeavours of good Parson BETTY, and many other temporally zealous Brethren, who labour for the Glory of God, that themselves may be exalted to a glorious Benefice. The Matter in Dispute surely is no other, than the *temporal Rights of Clergymen*; since not one Assertion you undertake to confute, respects the *Cause of Christianity* any farther than the CLAIMS of the Clergy are concerned.

- P. 4. You seem, Doctor, to resent the Assertion, That the Clergy are *mere Creatures* of the *State*: How far it is true in all such of them as have Opportunity to verify it, is too evident at present to require Instances. — But not a little humorous is your telling us, that we might AS WELL say, the *BIBLE* wants the Authority of the Broad Seal to
- Ibid.

to constitute it such; as, that a Bishop stands in need of it to make him one!!! You may well say, *you VENTURE to say it*; for I really think it a *brave* Assertion, and what requires much more *Front* than *Learning* to defend it!—— I dare say, most of the Laity, to whom you address yourself, will own the *sacred Authority* of the BIBLE without the *Broad Seal*: But, if you will force them by this Parallel to think a Man as fully a Bishop without it, I would be glad to know whence he derives *his* Authority; or how I shall know a Bishop from another Priest? Since I take it to be the Act (in the present Constitution of our Church) necessarily previous to any other Election, Ordination, Confirmation, &c. and the Fountain, whence ALL his ECCLESIASTICAL POWER springs: For what avails the mean Evasion of saying, that *Christian* P. 13. *Princes never consider'd themselves as the Source of spiritual Power*, when the Prince and his Subjects acknowledge no such Power in any without his Appointment?

You tell us, that the Design of your P. 5. writing was, “ to lay together a few
“ easy Observations, which may serve
“ to direct *plain* and *honest* Minds, who
“ are

"are not versed in Controversies of this kind."

THIS I think well premised: For the less your Reader knows (not only of this Controversy, but of every thing else) the better Chance you have to direct him: Since the less a Man is acquainted with the Road, the gladder he is of a seeming Guide, a *Will o'th' Wisp*, who therefore can more easily mislead or trapan him.

P. 6. I BELIEVE the Gospel; and therefore, as you own, have a Right to speak of it: But one would wonder what some Gentlemen had done to merit the Insinuation of being *indecent*, the Epithets of *Presumptuous* and *Ignorant*, till we come to the Bottom of the Page, where we find their Crime is, *Pretending to understand the Laws of Christ*; and, which is worse yet, *to write down the Powers of the Christian* CLERGY: OF ALL PERSONS LIVING, "say you, *these have the least Reason* — "to expect to be HEARD or answered." —

HERE, Doctor, is the true Spirit of a Priest: — Whoever writes against them, their Power or their Money, must not be heard; no, let him speak ever

ever such evident Truths, *be must not be* HEARD: — This, Reverend Doctor, unhappily for your Cause, happens to be out of your Power to prevent; as the answering them is beyond the Capacities of any of your Brethren, who have yet entered the Lists against them. — But a little more (were it but seeming) Moderation would well enough become a Christian Priest, who is commanded to *convince Gainsayers*, which cannot well be done without HEARING them.

THE Gospel being considered as the Religion of the Ages after its Commencement, and the Gifts of Inspiration to be ceased, you make the Faithful at a Loss how to preserve and transmit the Doctrines of the Apostles, for the Standard of Faith: And, with an Air of Triumph, after an emphatick Pause, you break forth: “ The Scripture

P. 7.

“ shews you in what manner the
“ Apostles themselves set out. *The*
“ *Things that thou hast heard of me, the*
“ *same commit thou to faithful Men, who*
“ *shall be able to teach others also.*” And then you cite another Text (which I repeat presently) in which St. Paul bids Titus ordain Elders, or Bishops,

P. 8.

2 Tim.
ii. 2.

or

or both, out of such as were of *Holy Lives*:

P. 9. WELL, Doctor, what of this? Why this you say, teaches us two Things, viz. That the Apostles thought the Gospel a Trust they were to hand down to future Generations; and that they chose the most *blameless Persons* they could meet with, for this weighty Charge.—This is still nothing to the Purpose: For, were they all made Bishops, as you would have it, you know we can draw no Comparison, between either their Character or Office, with those of our Time. What were the Elders chose for? To execute that Part of the Office which of all makes the greatest Figure in a Bishop's Hands now a-days, viz. to take care of the *temporal Affairs of the Church*, that the Bishop might have no Incumbrance in this Life, to call his Attention from pressing his Flock to a steady Regard to those of the next.

P. 10. “ —FROM this Act of the Apostles, appointing a *Succession* of Persons, with whom the Faith of the Gospel was *especially* to be entrusted, the *ordinary* ministerial Function, and the Distinction between Clergy and Laity takes its Rise.” —

WHERE

WHERE you find these Words on which you lay the Stress, *viz.* SUCCESSION, SPECIALLY, I cannot pretend to say: But am certain, neither they, nor any of equal Import, are to be found in Scripture; the Persons then chose were only selected for their sober Lives, and seem'd *special* on no other Account: As for a *Succession* of them, it seems wholly out of the Apostle's View at that Time.

— “Ask many who *call* themselves P. 10.
“Christians”, [*for none can be such who revere not all Priests*] “and they
“will tell you, that (for any Distinc-
“tion made by Christ or his Apostles)
“all Christians are Priests; all alike
“intrusted with the Ministration of
“the Word.” —

THIS, Doctor, is certainly true; and I here defy you, or the most dignified Gown-man among you, to PROVE the contrary, notwithstanding all your unmeaning Rhetorick which follows, *viz.* “But from the Beginning it was
“not so: Nor is it now so.” [*This Doctor, you know, to your no small Advantage*] “Nor has it ever been so.”

— Nobly asserted indeed: But it happens, that you have either lost or forgot your

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Proofs

Proofs of this Fact, or never had any :
What follows being no more than a
few flat *Affertions*, to prove an *Affer-*
tion you produce no Ground for.—

- P. 10. “ The Method begun by the Apostles,
“ in the very Nature of it, is such as
“ supposes a Continuance; the Reasons
“ upon which it was founded will per-
“ petually hold, &c.” — Very true :
But that *this Method*, and *these Reasons*
will make quite against your Purpose,
is easy to see; as we shall presently ob-
serve more fully.

- TELLING us, that we must suppose,
from the Days of the Apostles to the
Time of CONSTANTINE, the Church
was just in the Situation you would
have us believe, (or, as it now is) you
P. 11. sharply say, “ POWER the Church
“ then had none, but what rested en-
“ tirely within herself; AND THERE-
“ FORE THIS METHOD must have
“ been followed, unless you will sup-
“ pose, that, after the first or second Ge-
“ neration of Men were gone off, all
“ Things were left to *Chance* or *private*
“ *Discretion*, and every Man allowed
“ to take upon himself the Office of a
“ Minister in the Church, who had a
“ mind to it; a Notion both absurd in
“ itself,

“ itself, and a flat Contradiction to
 “ every Record of those Times that is
 “ now left us.”——

PRAY, Doctor, what Absurdity in supposing the Church supplied with Ministers by *Chance*, and *private Discretion*? Nay, is it not so now? Perhaps you'll say, no; because before a Man should be admitted into Orders, he must necessarily be so qualified, as to be a proper Person to be intrusted with the Ministration of the Christian Church.——This is far from answering to the METHOD the Apostles took in selecting Ministers: It is obvious, from Scripture, that NONE were chose Ministers in the Time of CHRIST and the Apostles, but such as were Men either of exemplary Lives, or great and remarkable Repentance; or who, some way or other, testified to the World the Purity of their Faith by the Tendency of their Works. The METHOD begun by Christ, and his *real* and immediate Followers, was indisputably THIS: And THIS METHOD was certainly designed for a Continuance. But surely you will not *venture to say*, THIS is the Method now used in our Church.——Holiness of Life, a Subjection of the Passions, &c. were THEN necessary Qualifications;

tions: Are they so now, by the boasted *Successors* to the holy Function? Are not a little theological Learning, and a professed Belief of what one Half of the Community disallow, sufficient Qualifications for a Priest at this Time? And is it not in the *private Discretion* of one Bishop to ordain him whom another rejected?

- P. 12. You ask us, "When the Empire became Christian, what followed? A Church there was already subsisting under the POWERS delegated from Christ. And did the *Roman Emperors*, because they were Christians, understand those POWERS as devolved to themselves?—Did they MAKE Bishops, or Priests, as they did Proconsuls and other Civil Officers, by *their own* Authority? No such Matter."—"Tho' in some Cases they restrained Churchmen in the Exercise of their Authority,—never did they consider themselves as the Source and Fountain of spiritual Power, or Churchmen as mere Creatures of State. For the Succession was still *every-where* carried on, and Bishops and Priests were made by Bishops."
- P. 13.

WHEN

WHEN the Empire became Christian, the almost first Thing that followed was its Misery and Destruction, not from the Gospel-Doctrines, but from (what you seem so fond of) the POWERS assumed by those who called themselves Gospel-Ministers. When CONSTANTINE, charm'd with the seeming Humility and Sobriety of the Priests, turn'd Christian, he soon felt an Alteration in the Clergy; who, ever ready to grasp at POWER, immediately began to meditate a supreme Authority over their Devotees, and curb'd, and, in a little time, subverted, that Government which first gave them publick Protection. Did not GREGORY II, by an unprecedented Assurance, excommunicate and kill the Vicar of the Empire for publishing the Imperial Decree against Images, and thereby move most of *Italy*, and the Emperor's own Troops to revolt, and chuse themselves another Master? Was not even the whole Christian World in a continual Ferment, by the Disputes between the PATRIARCHS of *Alexandria*, *Constantinople*, and *Rome*; till by the Ruin of the two former, the latter became possessed of that POWER which cost the Christians Rivers of Blood to procure him? Nor was

Anno
728.

Anno
1073.

was this sole supreme *spiritual* Power sufficient: For, after perpetual Strugglings for the *temporal* Authority also, we find at last even the Emperor himself deposed by the Craft and Villainy of a *Roman* Bishop, and forced to pass the *Alps* in Winter, divest himself of the Imperial Robes, and glad to walk barefoot, in a woollen Frock, to beg Pardon of, and be reinvested with his Crown from, a BISHOP OF ROME; and all this for no other Reason, than his exercising a Power derived to him from his Predecessors, of constituting Bishops, and governing his own Dominions. POWER *the Church then had*, with a Witness; nay, and when the restored Emperor HENRY happened to offend this powerful Bishop afterwards, we find his Reverence modest enough *Rodolph.* to send the Imperial Crown to another, and undertake to absolve the Emperor's Subjects of all Duty and Allegiance to their natural and lawful Sovereign.— If, Doctor, *the Succession was still continued every-where*, GREGORY was surely a regular *Successor to the Apostles*; but how a Christian can believe him such, is perhaps easier for you to explain, than me to conceive.—But this you must say to his Honour, that he was the

the first that ever, in a publick Manner, got a Bishop of *Rome* chose without the Emperor's Order; and laid the Foundation for that POWER in the *Clergy*, which afterwards reduced all Christians either to a State of Beggary or Vassalage, from the Throne to the Cottage.—And it is to this same Power and Authority of the Church, that we owe the Diversion of seeing in most of our Historians, LEWIS VI. of *France*, and HENRY II. of *England*, jointly leading the Horse on which the *Twin-Pope*, ALEXANDER III. entred *Tourcy* upon *Loire*! Whilst the other infallible Successor of St. *Peter* was, at the same Time, as much revered by *Spain* and the Empire!

A. D.
1161.

You seem to glory in insinuating, that the Emperors did not make Bishops; since, as you explain yourself, "*Nomination* or *Election* was never understood to create the Episcopal Authority; but ORDINATION, an Act purely spiritual, derived from Christ as Head of the Church, and exercised under him;—without which no Person can act as a Minister in the Church."—

P. 13.

PURELY metaphysical this Distinction indeed! But, however it may sound,

is

is it any more than mere Jargon? —
The Bishop is not a Bishop by Appointment from the Head of our Church; but is a Bishop independent of such Election or Appointment; because, his REAL POWER comes from those, who, in Obedience to that Appointment, ORDAIN him such!
 Merry enough! An Officer, in any kind, has not his Power from the King who appointed him to the Post; but from those, who, under his Majesty, confirm him in it: Without Ordination the Bishop cannot act as such, tho' the King has named him; no more can the other, without being invested by inferior Hands to him who nominates him to the Post. Besides, why must the whole Power of a Bishop proceed from his Ordination, when it is no more than the last Act of Form to confirm his Election? Is not his NOMINATION the *Means or Occasion* of all that follows? Does not that CAUSE the others? Why then must the latter be independent, and of a different Sanction from the former, when it is a mere Consequence of it? The Head of the Church I used to esteem the Head of Bishops, and cannot help still thinking, that where the real Power lies of MAKING Bishops (however you seem to dislike the Term)

Term) at Pleasure, THERE is the SOURCE of all their Authority *as such*:—And, I am persuaded, that few stanch Churchmen would dispute this Assertion in case of the Pope's Appointment; they being generally (as indeed their Arguments oblige them) well affected to his spiritual as well as temporal Authority and Succession, and fond of his Independency on temporal Princes, the tempting and beloved Aim of all our wrangling Leaders. For what can be more plain than this, even in your own Words, Doctor? You tell us that KINGS and EMPERORS did not make *Bishops*, and that their ORDINATION ONLY is understood to constitute them such.—Whether this is agreeable to the Constitution of the Church, of which you are so zealous a Member, I leave the World to judge!

You tell us, that our Laws know of P. 14.
no such Thing as a Bishop without Ordination:—True; nor of an Excise-man without taking the Oaths. Do the Oaths then MAKE a Man an Excise-man; and give him his Authority? Surely, No: Since those, who appoint him, can dispense with his Neglect, and

D

yet

yet his Power is the same: A Bishop possibly may act without *Ordination*, but not without APPOINTMENT. In a word, you know, that the *King* is Head of our national Church, and that all the Power a *Bishop* has, more than a Priest, flows from him, as FOUNTAIN of our *Episcopal Authority*, and, under God, Head of our Church; there being no Ecclesiastics in *England* endowed with such Episcopal Authority, any otherwise, than is RECEIVED FROM HIM, who is either their *spiritual Head*, or they are all Heads themselves.

P. 14,
15.

You triumph mightily in the Style of the Ordinance for Ordination of Priests; and tell us, it is there expressly said, "They are called to be Messengers, " Watchmen, and Stewards of the " Lord," — And are exhorted to shew " themselves dutiful and thankful to " THAT LORD WHO HATH PLACED " THEM in so high a Dignity." — Whatever divine Sense you would, by your great Emphasis, have us put on the Words, *that Lord who hath placed them*, I believe many would be apt, on such an Occasion, to extend their Eyes no farther than the LORD BISHOP.

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IN the same exalted Voice you immediately add, that in every Office, “whether for Bishops, Priests, or Deacons, the Ordination is SUGGESTED to be performed in pursuance of the Directions of Christ, who hath appointed divers Orders of Ministers in his Church.”——“And the very Words of Ordination run, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” And then you very judiciously ask, if, after this, “any Man in his Senses can doubt, whether a Bishop, in conferring Orders, is not considered by the Law, as executing a Commission under Christ?”

P. 15.

ibid.

THE Answer to this, is so very obvious, that it is almost trifling to add any other Words than your own to confute them. What has any Man to do with what is SUGGESTED in the Office of Ordination, that considers who suggests it? Have not all Men an equal Right to *suggest*, that, when they appoint a Minister of Christ’s Church, they do it in pursuance of his Directions; and, in the Name of Amazement, what is proved by tacking to the End

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of all you do, *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?* Was ever such an Argument used by any Man, but yourself! How can this possibly, as you most surprisingly insinuate, prove what the Law thinks of your Ordination? Pray, Doctor, in your next Performance, think of the *Sense* of what you write, before you publish it: And, as you labour for the Information of the Weak and Unlearned, let us be able at least to draw *some Meaning* or other from what you say, or our Edification will be but very little.

P. 15. IN the next place, to prove every thing you have asserted, you cite the following Words from the 37th Article, viz. "*WE GIVE NOT TO OUR PRINCES THE MINISTRING EITHER OF GOD'S WORD OR OF THE SACRAMENTS*; the which Thing the *Injunctions* also lately set forth by ELIZABETH our Queen do most plainly testify." The Use you make of this is most notoriously strain'd and unnatural; when you assert, that it is plain from hence, that, as Princes are not entrusted with the

the Adminiftration of the Word and Sacraments, therefore they cannot commit it to others; and yet you allow our Princes to be the Appointers of Bifhops, who entrult others with it; And is not this, without Evasion, in the moft extenfive Senfe, *committing* the Trult of the Miniftry of the whole Church to the Prince; fince no Man can adminifter the Word and Sacraments therein, unlefs licensed by thofe whom the Prince qualifies for that Purpofe, by making him a Bifhop, *under himfelf*, in that Church, of which HE is the Head.—Our Church is no way on a Foot with that of the ancient Jews (unlefs in relation to the *Tytbes* of the Levites:) And *their* Church can never be a Pattern for *ours*, till our Priests are appointed firft by God, and then take their Function by Birth. QUEEN ELIZABETH, you prove from the fame Article, challenged no other Prerogative than what God in Scripture gave to all godly Princes. This makes nothing to your Purpofe; nor can I fay any more to fuch a general Charge, than that their typical Ceremonies were eftablifhed by MOSES and AARON, in a very particular Manner: But our Church

Church is wholly model'd on a more spiritual Foundation, by Christ, *without one of the Offices or Ordinances* about which we are now disputing.

- P. 17. “ As the *Article* refers to the *Injunctions of Queen ELIZABETH*, to the “ *Injunctions* let us go:” [*With all my Heart, Doctor; but pray take me in your Hand:*] “ Where we find the “ same Thing asserted as in the Article, “ viz. That the Queen challengeth no “ Authority or Power of Ministry of “ divine Service (*i. e.* the Word and “ Sacraments) in the Church—nor any “ other Authority than that which was “ challenged—by King HENRY VIII. “ and King EDWARD VI.”——Your telling us, in Explanation of this, that King HENRY, in his Letter to the Clergy of the Province of York, says, *That the Ministration of the Sacraments was by Christ committed to Priests*, bears but little Weight, when we have read the indisputable Answer in the Commissions taken out by the Bishops in that and the following Reign (which appear to be too glaring even for yourself to over-look) acknowledging, “ THAT “ ALL JURISDICTION, ECCLESIASTICAL AS WELL AS CIVIL, FLOW'D “ FROM

“ FROM THE KING AS ITS ORIGINAL
 “ SOURCE, AND THAT THEY HELD
 “ THEIR BISHOPRICKS ONLY DURING
 “ THE KING’S PLEASURE.”—Those
 who made this Acknowledgment certainly
 were Bishops upon these Conditions;
 and consequently unable to transmit
 any other Authority to their Successors
 than what they possessed themselves;
 which would deprive our present
 Bishops of ANY Power, besides what
 came from the King; even supposing
 (as you would fain have it believed)
 that *Ordination alone makes a Bishop*.
 This is so very full, that all farther
 Dispute seems unnecessary: However,
 since you lay so much Stress, by a
 Regiment of staring Capitals, on some
 Words in the Instrument taken out by
 Bishop BONNER, I will have them to
 look at in your own Dress, viz. “ *We*
 “ *license you to do in our stead, in our*
 “ *Name, and in our Authority, whatso-*
 “ *ever Things do in any Ways appertain*
 “ *to the Episcopal Authority and Juris-*
 “ *dition, EXCEPT AND ABOVE*
 “ *THOSE THINGS WHICH WE*
 “ *ACKNOWLEDGE TO HAVE*
 “ *BEEN COMMITTED TO YOU*
 “ *OF GOD BY THE TENOR OF*
 “ *THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.*” If
 you

you would give me Leave to alter the Face of this, and put the *first* Sentence in Capitals, it would then stand much fuller to my Purpose than it now does to yours: For, by a Bishop's being commission'd to do his Office in the *KING's STEAD*, and in the *KING's NAME*, he certainly ORDAINS a Priest *in the King's stead*, and *in the King's Name*; that I think being Part of his Office; and consequently the Priest so ordain'd, has his Authority really from the King, and not from the Bishop, otherwise than as an Instrument in the King's Hand. I can by no means agree with your saying, That if there be any Sense in these Words, it is, That Bishops have an Authority vested in them by Christ, *distinct* from any they can receive from Christian Princes: Because you will hardly assert, they have it immediately from Christ, but *successively* from the MAKER of Bishops; either the Pope, King, &c. according to the Custom of different Nations.—

P. 20. Your striving to lose the Sense of these Words, WE LICENSE YOU TO ORDAIN, and telling us, Bishop BURNET was mistaken when he represents the King to be the Fountain of ALL POWER

POWER, is much below a Gentleman of your Rank; and your wresting the Word POWER into JURISDICTION, and *Jurisdiction* into MAGISTRACY, and *Magistracy* into CIVIL EFFECT, and *Civil Effect* into NOTHING, is something so novel and unanswerable, that, I believe, I had better avoid a Reply, lest we should both give equal Occasion to be laugh'd at.—But however I agree with your learned Conclusion, “That there is SOME Difference between a *Bishop* or a *Priest*, a *Super-* P. 21.
“*visor* or *Common Excise-man*.”

I AM surpris'd you should so exalt your Voice against those Gentlemen, who say the Clergy by OATH acknowledge their *whole Authority* flows from the King; which you most profoundly assert, is a wicked Abuse on simple Minds, AND CAN SCARCELY BE MATCH'D BY ANY EXAMPLE. Pray, good Sir, where the WICKEDNESS, where the ABUSE? What in these Words to deserve such Language? To say the Priest has his Power in the Church from the King the Head of the Church, “is such a
“WICKEDNESS as is SCARCE TO BE
“MATCH'D by EXAMPLE?”!! What more
E could

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could you say on the most inhuman Act? Would not these Words stand very naturally after a Massacre of the whole Nation? — And by this violent Outcry, can you hope to blind our Eyes, or captivate our Senses, from seeing, That this MATCHLESS WICKEDNESS is only a TRUTH which every sober impartial Man (tho' a PRIEST) must own. — Not only your OATH, but the *Nature of your Office*, prove you to be subservient Members to your HEAD in Christ: And it would be a *wicked Abuse* indeed, to make us simple Laymen believe your POWER was independent of the King, who give Powers to those, who, BY VIRTUE THEREOF, and not otherwise, gives it you. — These warm Breathings on such light, or rather on no Occasion, betray your Designs, and reduce your POWER, more than all the ludicrous Representations of modern Free-Thinkers; and does more for their Cause than themselves can.

P. 24. PASSING in silence what requires no Answer, let me ask you, what Good you think you have done to the Argument of Succession, by saying, "That
 " an Interruption in the Series of Bi-
 " shops

“shops concerns us not: And, as the
 “present Bishops are in Possession, let
 “those, who would dispossess them,
 “make a better Claim?” —

I HAVE the Charity to think, that none who dispute their *Claim*, desire their *Office*. — But immediately after this, is it not odd to hear you say, *Interruptions there have been, you confess, in the Succession of Bishops*; and still stranger in you to assert, That tho’ a Man, not canonically ordained, should *intrude* himself into a Bishoprick not vacant, yet he is nevertheless a Bishop; and his episcopal Acts valid; HIS Power not flowing from the Rules of the Church, but the Laws of Christ? What you here make of the *Christian Church*, or the *Laws of Christ*, I know not. If an aspiring Minister can *push himself* on the Power and Gifts of a Bishop, and thereby gain equal Authority from CHRIST with one properly constituted, what can we think of the Church he governs! or the Doctrine Men preach by his Appointment! — Besides, is not this notoriously confuting yourself? If a Bishop has his POWER by Succession from the Apostles, as you say he has; how can a Man, ap-
 E 2 pointed

P. 24.

P. 25.

pointed to that Dignity by nothing but his own UNLAWFUL AMBITION, inherit the same Gifts with one canonically constituted, then in Possession of the See? — But we shall soon see what drew you into this Absurdity. —

- P. 26. You carry it with a very high Hand, when you assert, That there is never a Man of COMMON SENSE in *England*, who will say there ever was any such Thing as a Bishop without *Episcopal Ordination*; and yet the Page before you say, That a Bishop uncanonically ordained, who forcibly *thrusts himself* into a See not vacant, is not therefore NO BISHOP. — I am willing here to believe, that your extreme Zeal for, and great Interest in, the Argument you are handling, has clouded your Discernment, and plunged you into such a Heap of Incoherencies and Contradictions: You say and unsay, and all for the Good of your Brethren, without considering that we weak-minded Laymen (for whose Benefit you declare you write) have not the same Motive and WEIGHTY Reason to byass our Judgments, which Side soever of the Argument is uppermost; so that we can-

not, with you, forget what was said on t'other Side of the Question, perhaps but ten Lines before.—I wonder you should say, not one Man of COMMON SENSE in *England* will say, there ever was a Bishop not episcopally ordained: When I can hardly help thinking, upon Reflection, you might recollect several, who are not ashamed to say so in publick. But certain it is, that many there are, many legal Successors to the Apostles in the Church of *Rome*, who allow not one of our present national Bishops to be Bishops at all, tho' they have the executive POWER of the Office.—Many of these are Men of *Common Sense*, and there are Men of *Commense Sense*, who think almost every thing; 'tis a wild Charge, Doctor, and sits but oddly on the Cloth!

I CANNOT bring myself to think the reformed Clergy's deriving their Orders or POWER from the idolatrous CHURCH OF ROME of so little Signification as you make it: "The Fact", *you say*, P. 28.
 "is allowed: The Church of *England*
 "HAD her Orders from the Church of
 "ROME, and it is her Glory she had
 "it from legitimate Hands, whether
 "cor-

“ corrupted or uncorrupted. I say,
 “ LEGITIMATE HANDS: For what
 “ have the CORRUPTIONS of any
 “ Church to do with the Conveyance
 “ of the MINISTERIAL AUTHORITY”.
 —“ Were Bishops no Bishops, be-
 “ cause through *Ignorance*, or *Wicked-*
 “ *ness* (if you please) they *adulterated*
 “ the true Gospel Doctrines? As rea-
 “ sonably may you say, That a Stew-
 “ ard is *no* Steward, because he accepts
 “ false Coin, or embezzles his Master’s
 “ Goods.”

WHY the *Church of England* should glory in having her Orders from the erroneous *Church of Rome*, I cannot conceive: And why, for the Sake of boasting of an extravagant and romantick Succession from the Apostles, you should assert the most WICKED MAN a legitimate CHRISTIAN BISHOP, is still more surprising. The absolute necessary Qualifications to form a common Christian, are *Purity of Morals* and *Holiness of Life*: If he becomes openly, and incorrigibly licentious, he ceases, in the Eye of the Church, *to be a Christian*; is renounced, and denied even Christian Burial. Shall then a *christian Bishop*, in whom all Virtues ought to abound, to
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the Example of our Directors and Guides, and to the Purification of the whole Church; whose only and alone Accomplishments for that high and holy Station, are a thorough Subjection of his Passions, a Regard for Futurity, and a Contempt of the Follies of the present Life: Shall he, disregarding all these necessary Qualifications, and abandoning himself to Vice and Folly, nay, to Blood and Rapine, be a *legitimate Minister* and Guide to lead to that holy and divine Being, whose Eyes are purer than to behold Iniquity? and undertake to direct us to that blessed Kingdom into which we are assured, from indisputable Authority, no unclean Thing can enter?—This Method of arguing your Succession, is not only notoriously repugnant to the *Sense of Scripture*, and the *Nature of the Thing*; but also so contradictory to *common Sense*, that I should blush to undertake confuting it, did you not swim in such Raptures when you unhappily chance to mention it; whilst even your own Words and Citations, but a few Pages before, are more than a sufficient Answer to all that can be urged on this Head, by yourself or any of your most
zea-

- P. 8. zealous Brethren. — You first quote *St. Paul*, where he charges *Timothy* to commit what he had told him to FAITHFUL Men; and where he also bids *Titus* ORDAIN such to be Elders (which you explain to be Bishops and Priests) as were *blameless, sober, just, holy, temperate*, — and then you add, as an Inference from it, That they DID
- P. 9. chuse “such Persons, as, by the SOUNDNESS OF THEIR FAITH, and the SOBRIETY OF THEIR LIVES, were “fittest for this divine Trust.” Now, Sir, if *Soundness of Faith*, and *Sobriety of Life*, made a Man FIT for this important Office, in the Time of the Apostles; can an ignorant or wicked Man be FIT for it? Nay, CAN he, being WICKED, discharge this HOLY TRUST any time after? Is it possible, that HE can inherit that Power, and transmit that to others, which never was given but to true Members of Christ’s mystical Body and Church, which no WICKED Man can be, whilst he remains such? — After all the *Scripture Anathema’s* against the evil Doer, is it not strange to hear a *legal Doctor* of the *Christian Church* asserting, That the holy and divine Gifts of the Ministry
are

are never the less existent in a Man once ordained a Priest, by reason of his ERRORS and WICKEDNESS, than it would be should he keep himself ever so conformable to the real Christian Discipline! — Does not GOD in the *Holy Scripture*, declare, that the Heart must be clean which he inspires? Do you think a *Roman Bishop* can either inherit or bestow the Power of Christ's Ministry at his own Pleasure, without conforming to the Rules upon which it ever hath been, and always will be granted? that is, in plain Terms, whether the ALMIGHTY will or no? Since he has often renounced every Worker of Iniquity, even from being a Member of his Community, much more from being an Inheritor of those Gifts which ever were the Reward of distinguish'd and exemplary Piety; and which, through the whole Scripture, appears not indeed given to *every holy Man*, but never given or continued where *Holiness was wanting*. — But, waving much more that will offer to every common Reader on this Head —

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Is it not somewhat unaccountable to see our Clergy so warmly blame, and pretend to renounce all the other Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, whilst you so strenuously assert the Legitimacy of their Succession to the Apostles; for no other Reason, as Men must see, than to give you a little more imagin'd POWER to boast of! Were it not much better, Doctor, to renounce all Relation to them in this respect, and venture, if possible, to stand on the Foundation that can never fail, *a Faith in Christ, according to the Scriptures, and Lives answerable thereto?*—Any thing else, however high it may sound in the Ears of the Unwary or Ignorant, and puff your own Vanity and Imagination, be assured, can never prevail with the Candid and Judicious, nor persuade thinking Men into a Belief of your Authority.

NAY, if our present Bishops derive not their Authority and POWER from this *Appointment of the Crown*; what will they alledge in Answer to the
 Claims

Claims of the nominal Bishops, whom the Church of Rome successively presents to each See in these Kingdoms, as regular Successors to the Bishops before the Reformation, from whom our Clergy, too weakly, are so fond of deriving their POWERS?—Or, were it possible to obviate this Difficulty, what can they say to the Nonjuring Bishops, and their Successors, who, by Influence of State, were deprived of their Bishopricks, and their Authorities given to Men more in the Interest of the then new Government? Is not this sufficient to evince to every one, That Bishops really, and plainly, take their Growth from the State; and are such, to no visible Effect, any longer than they act in Conformity to it?

Your Parallel, between a *Minister of Christ* and a *Steward*, is unnatural, in the Manner you use it.—You affirm, *we might as well say, a Steward is no Steward, because he embezzles his Master's Goods, or accepts false Coin; as that a Minister ceases to be a Minister, because*

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of Ignorance or Wickedness.——Pray, Doctor, does not a Steward, so acting, justly deserve to be dismiss'd his Employment? Nay, when detected, is he not discharg'd from his Master's Service for such Misdemeanour? Would it be reckoned good Usage, if, in such Case, others, declaring themselves trusty and careful Servants, should continue to acknowledge such a Person Steward, after he is rejected; pay him their Rents, as usual; and insist on his Receipts being a LEGITIMATE Discharge?——The Application of this is too obvious to need my Animadversion.

WHAT you say of the Church of Rome's transmitting a PURE, DIVINE, Authority to ours, tho' *not possessed of it herself*, is too plain to be refuted without Laughter; which makes me rather chuse, since you make no Medium in this Case, to remain one of those *weak* Heads, who hold, what you call, a SORRY Objection to your Power, than believe (at least, with you, endeavour to make others believe) that a

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corrupt and WICKED MAN, can be a HOLY and GOOD BISHOP at the same time!

You say, That a Bishop, in *ordaining*, P. 29. gives a Trust to “preach not his own Doctrines, but those of Christ; therefore, if the Person ordained sees Cause to depart from the Doctrine of the Bishop who ordain’d him, he is bound to depart from it.”—Suppose he should chance to think he had Cause to depart from all the said Bishop holds; according to your Doctrine, he is not the less a legitimate Priest, whether the Bishop, or himself, be right or wrong!—Pray, Sir, what is it then that is *transmitted* by this Ordination? is it only, as you seem to make it here, a POWER to boast of, and a Liberty to think and do as he pleases, without Danger of forfeiting his *Ministerial Gift*, or AUTHORITY? Are there not Qualifications requisite to obtain him this first Order? And, can you hope to persuade us, that even when he is arrived at the holy

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holy Station of a Bishop, he may throw all *Religion, Virtue, and common Honesty*, behind him; shew a WICKED Example to his Flock, and even bring *false Doctrines* into the Church; and yet remain, in Point of his *Spiritual Powers*, as fully capable of his Office as the most circumspect, vigilant, and pious, among them? As soon might the Ministerial Gift, and Power, be convey'd through the Hands of a Person who had never been ordained; nay, surely, much more probably; the unordained Person, if a Man of a *holy Life*, comes nearer the Scripture Conditions.

P. 29,
30.

THE Article of *Cree-making* I agree with you in, supposing you will leave it to every Man's *own Understanding*, whether to regard them or no; as well as to the Bishop to make them according to his "*own Understanding*": You might, had you chose it, have told us, you blame no-body for rejecting them when made; tho' by a hundred Bishops; which,

which, as it is a just and generous Sentiment, I am willing to believe yours.

You are much to be commended for your lively Picture of the *mutual Dependency* of CHURCH and STATE; wherein you assure us, That “whilst P. 32.
“ the Civil and the Ecclesiastical
“ Powers act in Concert, all will be
“ well: The State needs not to envy
“ the Church her Spiritual Authority,
“ whilst Churchmen yield that Allegi-
“ ance to Kings, which is NECESSARY
“ to give Strength and Stability to
“ their Government?”——

THAT the Church Allegiance is NECESSARY to support a LAWFUL *Civil Government*, has been indeed experienced by some Princes at a very dear Rate: But that it OUGHT TO BE SO, will not so readily be allowed: Since in the Beginning it *was not so*; the Founder of our Religion tells us, it *should not be so*; and numerous Examples teach us, that the State is in a very precarious
Con-

Condition, where *it is so*.—What but this imagin'd Share in the Legislature, has involv'd so many Princes in the unhappy Disputes with their Subjects, which have perpetually rendered their Reigns and Lives tumultuous and successless, and often ended in their Ruin? —In these Commotions the PRIEST has a very great Advantage of his PRINCE, by having free Access to the *Ears of the whole People*, who, perhaps, (as indeed it too often happens) through a Prepossession in his Favour, mistake HIS CAUSE for the CAUSE OF GOD; and consequently think it their Duty rather to adhere to *what he directs*, than to the *true Interests of their SOVERAIGN*, their COUNTRY, and THEMSELVES.

- P. 34. You say, that “ *Priestcraft, Spiritual Tyranny, Domineering over Men’s Consciences*, and the like, are fine Words to lead up a Cry with, when the Clergy are to have the Mob raised about their Ears, and to be made odious.”

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To this it is easily answered, that the chief, if not all those who have raised, what you here call, a *Cry against the Clergy*, have happened to be Men as usual, using the Name of Mob, as the *Fraternity* itself: They have been Men of *Learning, Ingenuity, Honour and Character*; and some of them of considerable Figure; who could have no *self-interested Views* from their Labours, received no *Stipend* for what they taught, and wished no other Reward for their generous Endeavours to propagate Knowledge, and unscale our Eyes, than what results to every virtuous Mind on doing a good Action: Nor is it probable, that their Productions appeared, that the *Clergy might be despised*; but that *Mankind might be informed*: And if the latter Design, by the Force of Truth and Reason, should produce the former Effect; must we, to prevent it, be kept in Ignorance? Must ALL Mankind be kept in the dark, and be deceived, rather than a FEW should be laugh'd at, who have the greatest room

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to laugh in their Sleeves at the Reverence, and MONEY, given them for doing that, which the real Ministers of Christ know themselves obliged to do for NOTHING, according to their original Institution; or, at least, for voluntary Rewards, and not for forc'd ones!—This, Doctor, I only say by way of Supposition, it not being, perhaps, the present Case: To evince, that were the *Contempt of the Clergy* a natural Consequence of *Truth's being generally received*, it can be no Objection to its Propagation.

- P. 34. You say, “If any should suspect I
 “ am fighting with Shadows of my
 “ own making, let him go to the Author
 “ of the INDEPENDENT WHIG: A
 “ Writer! of whom I will say nothing:
 “ But leave his *Works* to speak his *Me-*
 “ *rit.*” A Writer! who, I am very
 willing to believe, (and am persuaded
 the World will for us) has *said more than*
we can both say. And whose Works have
 al-

already spoke his Merit so well, as to leave nothing for us to add!

OF the Clergy, you “ beg Leave to P. 35.
“ say thus much: That never did they
“ deserve ill Treatment less than now:
“ No-where is Christianity taught in
“ greater Purity than in the Church of
“ *England*: In no Age has it been bet-
“ ter defended than in this: In no Time
“ have there been fewer Causes of
“ Complaints of the Behaviour of the
“ Clergy in Point of Morals: Never
“ was there a better Disposition in them
“ to pay Duty and Allegiance to HIS
“ MAJESTY and HIS ROYAL FAMILY.
“ From whence it is manifest, that these
“ Out-rages against the Order, are the
“ Effect of mere Libertinism, and a gene-
“ ral Dissatisfaction to all revealed Reli-
“ gion; against which some Men are so
“ violently bent, that neither Parts,
“ nor Learning, nor Sobriety, nor Loy-
“ alty, nor all the good Qualities uni-
“ ting in a Clergyman, which constitute
“ an amiable Character, and would

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“ gain him Honour in any other Situa-
 “ of Life, (no, nor DIGNITY added to
 “ these) can secure him from those Af-
 “ fronts, which a Man, that understands
 “ himself, would be ashamed to offer
 “ to a common Porter. There are, I
 “ trust, some reasonable Men still left
 “ among us; and how much these
 “ Things are for our Credit, or what
 “ Consequences they may produce, let
 “ *such* judge.”

ILL Treatment I would by no means
 have the Clergy, or any other Set of
 Men, meet with: Nor do I apprehend
 this Insinuation just: To make Enquiry
 into the Merit of their Claim to Regard
 and Contribution, is, surely, no ill
 Treatment; since it is our Right to
 know *why* we are to suppose *them* en-
 dued with more Spiritual Authority than
ourselves, and whence their Right of
 Maintenance derives: But here you
 could not avoid the beaten Tract of
 your Brethren, by crying out against
 the least Query of your POWER. That
the Clergy are insulted, the Church in
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Danger, and the whole *Fabrick of Episcopacy attack'd*.—Nothing more betrays the Weakness of a Cause, than its Inability to bear Scrutiny. Were the Clergy themselves, in their own Consciences, fully convinced of the Validity of their own Foundation; it is my humble Opinion, they are Men of too much Candour, to make such clamorous Remonstrances against every little Offer to discuss their Pretensions. Whatever you may think of the modern *Defences of Christianity*, it is obvious, all of them have not been written by Clergymen: But allowing they had; alas! it is too evident, that their Success is not considerable enough to boast of!—The *Morality of the Clergy*, in general, is well enough known to convince every Man; that, if there never was less Reason to find Fault, there never was too much Occasion to applaud their Conduct in this Respect. Particular Instances I scorn: But whether, in general, their Behaviour, as to Charity, Sobriety, Chastity, Brotherly Love, and Hospitality; is

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answerable, to what it must *necessarily be*, to constitute them what they assume the Name of, I forbear to determine.—

Their *Duty and Allegiance to his Majesty*, I do not any way dispute; but, perhaps, it may not be more owing to Zeal for our Civil Establishment, than Regard to their own Interest. Have they not all their POWERS in full Force? Their Lands and Hereditaments (*however acquir'd*) in the most secure Tranquillity? Nay, have they not COMMENDAMS beyond Imagination, and DISPENSATIONS in abundance! * * * * *

* * * * * —I am much at a Loss to know what you mean by the *Affronts*, which, you say, even DIGNITY ITSELF cannot secure a Priest from; and yet no Man, who understands himself, would offer to a common Porter. —Nor can I conjecture what you glance at in this Expression, unless you want the Completion of that truly Apostolical Wish of ARCHBISHOP LAUD: That he hoped to see the Day that ne'er a JACK-GENTLEMAN in the Kingdom should dare to stand before a
PRIEST

PRIEST *with his Hat on!*——For it is evident, that the Vulgar, those who are always supposed to understand themselves *least*, ever shew *most* Regard to the Cloth, and have the greatest Veneration for the present worthy Successors of the Apostles.——Besides, Doctor, you know the true Christian is not to be a Flatterer on any account; and consequently not to conform to the Regards usually shewn to any Men, who, by some means or other, attained to a Pitch of Dignity, farther than his Conscience and the Fitness of Things require.——It is this Regard to *Dignity*, where the Dignity happens to be wrongly placed, that produces the greatest Inconvenience to Society, and has involved Mankind in Errors for many Ages. Regard to *Civil Magistrates* is necessary to the Well-being of a Commonwealth; but other than that, is not absolutely essential to any desirable End: And in all Ages and Countries, wherein the Honours, due to Priests, have been settled, and protected by the State, and
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The CLAIMS of the CLERGY

the People compelled to obey them; it has always proved the *Bane of the People*, and, generally, the Subversion and *Ruin of the Government*: Which sufficiently demonstrates the Wisdom of our present Constitution; by which, tho' we are obliged to contribute to the Support of our Clergy, yet we are left to our own Choice, whether we will pay them, or their Doctrines, any other Regard; and are therefore wholly independent on their Teachings, unless ourselves think them consonant to the Scriptures, and the excellent Plan of CHRISTIAN MORALITY therein contained.—Were it otherwise: Were we forced (as many other Nations are) to take our *Priests Interpretations* of those sacred Writings, as the *true Sense* of them, without daring to declare the least Doubt; we should soon see the glorious Sun-beam, which has for some Years enlightened the Understandings, enlarged the Ideas, and reformed the Sentiments of every ingenuous and well-meaning Enquirer, begin to eclipse: And our Posterity, in a few Ages, would be plung'd

plunged into as deep an Abyss of Error, as ever was that from which our most illustrious Ancestors extricated themselves; many of them at the Price of their *Families*, their *Estates*, and *Lives*.

UPON the whole, Doctor; let me entreat you, or any of your Brethren, whose Zeal for YOURSELVES obliges you to appear publickly in Defence of YOUR OWN ORDER, to consider, that, when you address your Labours of this kind to us Laymen, you appeal to those, who, not being hood-winked by the Opulences of Spiritual Advantage, have unclouded Eyes to read your Pleas; and therefore seldom see your Arguments so conclusive as the forementioned Reasons prevail with yourselves to think them. And, above all, let me desire you, especially on such Occasions, to avoid such frequent Claim to POWER and AUTHORITY: Things, which, to a Layman, with a *New-Testament* in his Hand, appear no way attendant on a Minister of the Church, and wholly

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foreign to the Purpose and Design of a *Christian Priesthood*; whose Authority was to be of a Nature very different from what we see assumed in our Time. For be assured, that while Churchmen make Gain their governing Principle of their Actions, the Laity (especially the more unthinking Part of us, which, perhaps, is by much the Majority) will not easily be prevail'd on to think them in earnest, when they *direct* us to Springs of Actions purely spiritual; without taking one Step in the rugged Path *themselves*, farther than is productive of some visible and immediate Reward in this Life; whilst, at the same time, we are all told to expect no Recompence for our Virtue here, but to depend on a sufficient Return to all Sufferings, hereafter. Nor can it be wondered at, when this Consideration has an Effect which good Men see with Concern; since the Bulk of us, being unlearned, and of but common Apprehensions, are much sooner mov'd by EXAMPLE than PRECEPT; and apt to think a
Clergy-

repugnant to CHRISTIANITY.

51

Clergyman gives a much more *convincing Proof* of the VALIDITY OF HIS COMMISSION, by living a holy and sober Life, and shewing a truly Christian Pattern of *charitable and blameless* Conduct; than by demonstrating, ever so plainly, that Archbishop PARKER was consecrated in *Lambeth-Chapel*.

I am,

Reverend DOCTOR,

Jan. 31,
1734-5.

Your Most Obedient,

Humble Servant, &c.

F I N I S.

Christians give a much more
of the V. A. and the Com-
munion by living a holy and sober
life, and living a truly Christian
Pattern of life, and the Com-
munion is then by demonstration, ever is
plenty, the Archbishop's prayer was
concluded in these words.

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